



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

## UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS

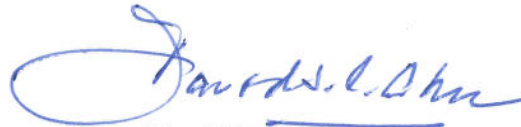
SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response In-Theater

Sexual assault is unacceptable behavior and threatens mission readiness and unit cohesion. The Department's program to combat sexual assault relies on commanders at all levels exercising strong leadership, both in support of the program and in ensuring access to resources. Your leadership is vital to creating a climate of confidence wherein victims can come forward and receive care without fear of retribution or retaliation.

The Department of Defense Sexual Assault and Response Directive (DODD 6495.01), provides for the establishment of a 24/7 response to all military victims of sexual assault worldwide, to include deployed environments. Doing so, ensures that a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) is available to all Service Members. Based on feedback from our policy assistance visits and recommendations from a recent GAO report that cited inconsistent training and a lack of consistent command emphasis, Senior leader emphasis needs to be placed on this program in-theater. I am requesting your thoughts and comments on emphasizing the responsibility for senior commanders in your Area of Responsibility (AOR) to accomplish these four critical missions:

- 1) Ensure Commanders have identified the SARC in their respective operational environments (OE), to include joint operations area (JOA), and that all SARCs are current in their training. All SARCs should be identified and trained prior to deployment.
- 2) Ensure there is a 24/7 response capability for victims within their respective OE, including JOA.
- 3) Ensure Commanders and all first responders (i.e. SARCs, Victim Advocates, Military Criminal Investigative Organizations, health care personnel, etc), know how to access available resources, e.g., medical, counseling, and legal assistance; and how to assist a victim to access these resources.

- 4) Ensure all personnel in-theater receive training on sexual assault reporting options and how to contact Victim Advocates and/or SARCs in the AOR, particularly when their personnel are deployed to forward operating bases or other areas where support services may be limited. In the event an exception to this policy is warranted for any person, a written request for an exception to policy should be submitted to USD (P&R) for approval.
- 5) Ensure senior officers have received the mandatory pre-deployment sexual assault prevention and response training.



David S. C. Chu